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ABSTRACT

Since independence, Sierra Leone has struggled with an inherited colonial educational system that is dysfunctional and irrelevant to the needs of a largely rural population. In an effort to remedy this situation, the Bunumbu Project, sponsored by UNESCO and other international aid organizations, was begun in 1974. Involving Bunumbu Teacher's College and 20 pilot schools, the project sought to improve preservice and inservice teacher training and to produce a new elementary school curriculum with a rural bias. In the mid-1980s, program implementation and impact were evaluated using case study methodology, including observation and interviews. Findings revealed that the project was implemented via many trials and errors. Outcomes with regard to major program objectives were as follows: (1) rural curricula for pilot schools and the college were developed; (2) pilot schools were rebuilt but were not transformed into community learning centers; and (3) implementation of the adult literacy program was not successful. Program impact included teacher development, improved school conditions, technical support for local agricultural development from blacksmithing workshops associated with pilot schools, and increased administrator and teacher confidence to tackle educational and community problems. Weaknesses and problems included unclear goals, too many objectives, physical isolation, lack of feedback and participative planning, lack of personnel trained in change implementation, and lack of resources. The Fullan model of implementation used in the evaluation was not adequate for the Sierra Leone context because it neglected social, political, and cultural factors affecting the change process. Contains 145 references. (SV)

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